

or his designee, it stand adjourned until 2 p.m. on Tuesday, December 6, 2005, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first; and that when the Senate recesses or adjourns on any day from Friday, November 18, 2005, through Wednesday, November 23, 2005, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand recessed or adjourned until noon on Monday, December 12, 2005, or Tuesday, December 13, 2005, or until such other time on either of those days, as may be specified by its Majority Leader or his designee in the motion to recess or adjourn, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first.

SEC. 2. The Speaker of the House and the Majority Leader of the Senate, or their respective designees, acting jointly after consultation with the Minority Leader of the House and the Minority Leader of the Senate, shall notify the Members of the House and the Senate, respectively, to reassemble at such place and time as they may designate if, in their opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include tabular and extraneous material on the conference report to accompany H.R. 2528.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2528, MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 564, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 2528) making appropriations for military quality of life functions of the Department of Defense, military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 564, the conference report is considered read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of November 17, 2005, Book II.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I do intend to be brief, but this is an important bill for our military and I would like to expand a little bit on some of the points within it.

But before I do that, I would like to describe the conference that we had with the Senate as successful. I would like to thank my ranking member, Mr. EDWARDS of Texas, who has been at my shoulder all the way through this process. We worked very, very closely together. We have had the same priorities and we have tried to work out any disagreements that we had along the way.

I would also like to thank Chairman LEWIS for his leadership and his forethought in realigning the jurisdiction of this subcommittee.

The House bill included the accounts for basic allowance for housing, facilities sustainment, restoration and modernization, environmental restoration and the Defense Health Program. This was designed as a first step toward examining military quality of life as a whole, from active duty through retirement.

We have received nothing but positive feedback from the senior non-commissioned officers all the way up to the four-star service chiefs. I would hope that our colleagues in the other body would take a look at what the House has done and follow suit, but for this year, while the subcommittee retains jurisdiction over these four accounts, the conference report before the House today does not contain that funding. The funding will be included in the Defense appropriations bill and will return to the Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs bill next year.

The conference report provides \$6.2 billion for military construction, including quality of life facilities such as child care centers, medical facilities and training facilities. It also provides \$4 billion for family housing construction and maintenance. This funding will continue moving toward the goal to eliminate inadequate family housing for our military, through both the privatization program and traditional construction. In addition, the bill includes \$1.7 billion to maintain readiness and transform the military through the base realignment and closure process, the Army's modularity initiative, and the global repositioning of our forces.

For the Department of Veterans Affairs, the agreement provides a total of \$22.547 billion for medical services. This amount includes the original budget request, plus \$1.1 billion to reverse policy proposals included in the

budget request, but not endorsed by the conference. These are \$496 million for long-term care; \$202 million for pharmacy copays; and \$454 million for enrollment fees.

In addition, the agreement provides for workload increases and corrections of errors as identified in the budget amendment submitted on July 14, 2005. A portion of these additional funds are only available upon submission of a revised budget amendment by the President which declares the funding an emergency. This is necessary for us to effectively provide these funds and still remain within our 302(a) allocation from the Budget Committee.

The conference agreement also includes a number of reporting requirements so that the committees will be fully informed about potential problems that the Department may encounter throughout the year of execution before it is too late.

Other significant changes to the budget request include:

The creation of an Information Technology Systems account to allow us to keep track of information technology programs at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

\$2.2 billion of medical services funding is fenced to be used only for specialty mental health care, a priority of many members of the committee and the House. We received testimony after testimony encouraging us to make sure that a minimum amount was provided for mental health care, and that is what we have done.

\$15 million for research into Gulf War Illness.

\$19 million over the President's request for medical and prosthetic research.

\$85 million for grants for State Extended Care facilities. This is \$85 million above the President's request.

We have fully funded the cost-of-living allowance of 4.1 percent for veterans compensation.

We also provide an increase of \$273 million for medical services for veterans returning from Iraq.

\$200 million is included to cover workload growth in priority 1-6 veterans.

\$600 million is provided to correct errors in the calculation of funding needed for long-term care.

Mr. Speaker, I will close by saying I think we have a good bill to put before the Congress. I am very grateful to our Appropriations Committee staff for their professional work and their patience as we worked through this process and for the late hours that they spent preparing the bill. I believe it is a bill everyone can support.